

Allied Computer Store and the first Apple II computer.

By Michael Holley

http://www.swtpc.com/mholley/Apple/allied_computer.htm

Written Nov 2005, revised Feb 2016

When I was going to the College of San Mateo (1975-1977) I worked at a local computer store, Allied Computers. My job was to assemble computer kits. This included IMSAI, Processor Tech, SWTPC and any other kit that a customer wanted assembled. I would take my pay in computer parts. The first pay check was a SWTPC CT-1024 terminal followed by a SWTPC 6800 computer. By November of 1976 I had a complete system running BASIC.

Chet Harris, the store owner, was trying to set up a chain like the Byte Shops and Computer Land. I got to meet some interesting people then, like a field trip to Bill Godbout's where we met Bill and George Morrow. Chet and I went to the Computer Shack store in San Leandro to talk with the management in early 1977. Radio Shack claimed trademark infringement on name Computer Shack so it was changed to Computer Land.

One of our customers at Allied Computer was Bill Kelly. He was working for Regis McKenna Advertising on the Apple II introduction. He has a web page that talks about the early days at Apple Computer. (www.kelleyad.com/Histry.htm) He had worked on the Intel account and had an Intel SDK-80 evaluation board that he gave me in exchange for a power supply for his prototype Apple II board. (I still have that SDK-80 board with tiny BASIC.)



We sold Apple II main boards before the plastic case was ready. The boards were available around April 1977. Apple had difficulty with the plastic case. The early prototype (and production) units did not have the vent slots on the case. I think they were flying the tooling back and forth from Los Angeles to San Jose. The factory was in one place and the tool designer was in the other.

Allied Computer was a distributor for Apple and Chet had tried to interest Mike Markala in investing in his enterprise but Mr. Markala was going with Apple. He got Mike Markala to come to his store to demo the Apple II computers. I sat at a table with him for several hours demonstrating the Apple II.

One Saturday Chet came in with the first two Apple II computers built, Serial number 1 and 2. (This was in June 1977.) Chet Harris had gone to the Apple factory in Cupertino to pick them up. He sold #1 to a friend of his and I took #2 home with me. I hooked it up to our color TV and loaded various games. I showed the system to friends for a week or so until the power supply died. It went back to Apple and I never saw that unit again.

In October 2005 I told this story to Bruce Damer and he knew where serial number 2 ended up. Bruce visited Jef Raskin (formerly with Apple Computer) in January 2005 and got to see Jef's Apple 1 and Apple II serial number 2.



Because Allied Computer was a distributor I went to other local computer stores to deliver products. The computer store personal were impressed with the graphics and sound that the Apple II provided. This was the first computer they had seen with those features. They also liked the memory expansion capabilities the Apple had. They would order the 4K units and add in more memory.

During the time of Apple II development I attended the Homebrew Computer Club meetings at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Auditorium. Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs also were there. I remember Steve Wozniak showing an Apple prototype in the lobby. I also remember Steve Jobs bringing the prototype Apple II case to a meeting.



My system is a Southwest Tech 6800 with 36k of memory, dual mini floppies, a Hazeltine 1500 video terminal, and a Trendata1000 Selectric terminal. The small box on the disk drive is my low cost modem. This photo is from the Northwest Computer News, July 1978.

The Trendata 1000 was an IBM Selectric terminal based on the IBM 2741. These could be used for creating Texas Air National Guard memos.

This photo is going to be used at the new exhibit at the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science. STARTUP: ALBUQUERQUE and the Personal Computer Revolution.

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My Southwest Technical Products TV Typewriter at VCF 7.0, Nov 2004



Homebrew Computer Club 30th Anniversary.
Michael Holley, Steve Wozniak, Allen Baum, Lee Felsenstein, Bob Lash.
www.swtpc.com/mholley/Homebrew/Homebrew.htm

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My Southwest Technical Products Booth from VCF 8.0, Nov 2005
www.swtpc.com/mholley/VCF/VCF8.htm
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